

# Choosing Child Care

**Q**uality child care is important. Children's brains develop rapidly during their first 5 years and much learning and growing takes place at this young age. Children's early interactions with people have a strong influence on brain development. Experiences in these early years can shape the way children learn, think, and behave for the rest of their lives.



Everyone who cares for them—parents, family members, child care providers, and friends—can make a difference in raising healthy, happy, confident children.

Before you choose a child care provider, think about what type of care would best meet your child's and your family's needs. To help you decide, use the information in the Child Care Comparison Chart and follow the steps below.

**Step 1: Consider your options.** You can choose a relative or friend, licensed family child care home, or licensed child care center.

**Step 2: Identify possible care providers.** Once you know the type of care option(s) you're interested in, identify several care providers to contact.



**Step 3: Interview providers.** Schedule a phone or in-person interview with each care provider you are considering. It's important that you feel good about your child's care provider.

**Step 4: Visit, observe, and evaluate what you see.** Schedule time to observe the care providers or centers while other children are there to see if you feel comfortable with them.

When you're choosing a child care provider, look for one who:

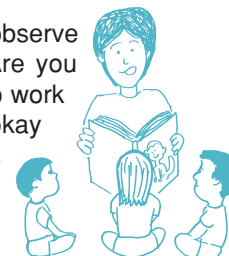
- Loves to do things together with your child
- Has toys that match your child's age
- Talks to and reads to your child every day
- Praises your child's accomplishments
- Knows how to guide children and encourage appropriate behavior using effective methods instead of using harsh punishment
- Provides a safe, interesting environment where children are not bored.



**Step 5: Check references.** Ask the providers for the names and phone numbers of at least two parents who are currently using or have previously used their services. Call these parents and ask them what they think about the care their children are getting.

**Step 6: Make a decision.** Review the information you collected from your interviews, observations, and reference checks. If you have questions that were not answered, call back and get more information. Trust your instincts when making your decision.

**Step 7: Follow up.** After you choose a child care provider, observe and monitor the situation. Does your child seem happy? Are you comfortable with the provider's care? If problems arise, try to work them out with your provider. If you cannot resolve them, it's okay to make a change. However, try not to make too many changes. Your child needs continuing and stable care at this young age.



## Resources:

Refer to the booklet, *Choosing Child Care*, for more detailed information. To receive a copy of the booklet or other child care resource information call:

**PATCH** 839-1988 (O'ahu)  
246-0622 (Kaua'i)  
329-7101 (West Hawai'i)  
961-3169 (East Hawai'i)  
242-9232 (Maui)  
1-808-498-4145 (toll-free from Moloka'i and Lāna'i)

## THE PARENT LINE




526-1222 (O'ahu)  
1-800-816-1222 (toll-free from other islands)



CENTER  
ON THE  
FAMILY

Prepared by the Center on the Family  
University of Hawai'i  
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# Child Care Comparison Chart

License-Exempt* Relative or Friend Care		Licensed Family Child Care Home	Licensed Child Care Centers																																				
<div>Adult-Child Ratio</div> <div></div>	<table><thead><tr><th>Child's Age</th><th>Recommended Adult-Child Ratio</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Birth to 18 months</td><td>1:2 (1 adult to 2 children)</td></tr><tr><td>18 months to 2 years</td><td>1:4</td></tr><tr><td>2 to 3 years</td><td>1:5</td></tr><tr><td>4 to 5 years</td><td>1:6</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>* A license-exempt provider can care for up to 2 children who are not related to the provider.</p>	Child's Age	Recommended Adult-Child Ratio	Birth to 18 months	1:2 (1 adult to 2 children)	18 months to 2 years	1:4	2 to 3 years	1:5	4 to 5 years	1:6	<table><thead><tr><th>Child's Age</th><th>Required Adult-Child Ratio</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Birth to 18 months (children)</td><td>1:2 * (1 adult to 2 children)</td></tr><tr><td>18 months to 6 years</td><td>1:6 **</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>* No more than 2 babies under 18 months old can be cared for in a family child care home at the same time.</p> <p>**A maximum of 6 children can be cared for in a family child care home at the same time.</p> <div></div>	Child's Age	Required Adult-Child Ratio	Birth to 18 months (children)	1:2 * (1 adult to 2 children)	18 months to 6 years	1:6 **	<table><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Infant and Toddler Center: Required Adult-Child Ratio*</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Child's Age</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>6 weeks to 12 months (children)</td><td>1:3 (1 adult to 3 children)</td></tr><tr><td>12 months to 24 months</td><td>1:3</td></tr><tr><td>18 months to 36 months</td><td>1:3</td></tr></tbody></table> <table><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Child Care Center: Required Adult-Child Ratio</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Child's Age</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2 years</td><td>1:8</td></tr><tr><td>3 years</td><td>1:12</td></tr><tr><td>4 to 5 years</td><td>1:16</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>*Ratios may vary depending on group size.</p>	Infant and Toddler Center: Required Adult-Child Ratio*		Child's Age		6 weeks to 12 months (children)	1:3 (1 adult to 3 children)	12 months to 24 months	1:3	18 months to 36 months	1:3	Child Care Center: Required Adult-Child Ratio		Child's Age		2 years	1:8	3 years	1:12	4 to 5 years	1:16
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<div>Advantages</div>	<p>A relative or friend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides care in a home-like setting.</li><li>May be someone that your child trusts and feels comfortable with.</li><li>May provide a sense of "extended family."</li><li>May be more flexible about caring for children who are ill.</li><li>May be more willing to provide a flexible schedule.</li></ul> <div></div>	<p>A <b>licensed</b> family care home provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides care in a home-like setting.</li><li>May offer more opportunities for a child to interact with children of other ages.</li><li>Has some formal training, including first aid and CPR, to provide a safe, healthy learning environment for children.</li><li>Must have a doctor or nurse who is available to consult about health questions.</li><li>May be more willing to provide a flexible schedule.</li><li>Must have another adult "on-call" in case of emergencies.</li></ul>	<p>A <b>licensed</b> center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Has more than one adult to care for your child.</li><li>Is able to provide care even when there are staff emergencies. (If a teacher is sick, another teacher or substitute will be there to care for your child.)</li><li>Provides more opportunities for a child to interact with other children.</li><li>Has staff who have formal training in child development and early education, as well as first aid and CPR. Many child care centers require teachers to be certified (which shows that a teacher has completed college courses).</li></ul>																																				
<div>Potential Disadvantages</div>	<p>A relative or friend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May not be trained in child care and in health, first aid, and CPR.</li><li>May work alone, unobserved by others.</li><li>If working alone, may have more difficulty handling emergencies.</li><li>May experience stress and tiredness from long hours and isolation.</li><li>May not be available for child care when he/she is sick or has family emergencies.</li></ul>	<p>A <b>licensed</b> family care home provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May work alone, unobserved by others.</li><li>If working alone, may have more difficulty handling emergencies.</li><li>May experience stress and tiredness from long hours and isolation.</li><li>May not be available for child care when he/she is sick or has family emergencies.</li></ul>	<p>A <b>licensed</b> center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May feel large and impersonal.</li><li>May have shift changes during the day which could mean:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- your child may have to adjust to two or more teachers each day.</li><li>- there may be communication gaps between teachers and parents.</li></ul></li><li>May require more conformity (children must follow rules) and routine (stricter schedules) than home-based care.</li></ul>																																				